

COVID Update Bulletin #7

SIRE/BIRE and OVID Programmes

Inspection guidance during the global COVID-19 pandemic

The global COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many industries, and the global oil, gas and petro-chemical transportation industry is no exception.

International and much regional travel has been severely restricted during the pandemic. The guidance of most governments to their citizens is to avoid international travel. Restrictions on movement within a country for non-essential workers and the current restrictions in place around access to facilities and terminals make visiting ports and terminals very difficult. Restrictions can change at short notice.

The decision to commission SIRE/BIRE and OVID inspections rests with the Member/Submitting Organisation. In many cases, the circumstances in the countries where inspections are conducted make the commissioning and completion of inspections challenging. Inspections have or may soon become impossible to conduct in some locations.

Travel across international and regional borders, and in many cases, movement within a country are severely restricted. Violation of travel restrictions may have criminal consequences for the individual involved and reputational consequences for those commissioning the travel.

To reduce avoidable travel and interpersonal interactions, OCIMF has suspended all training and accreditation activities including all training courses, audited inspections and accompanied inspections until further notice.

OCIMF, on behalf of its members, has developed the following guidance to programme participants for the conduct of programme inspections and use of the resulting reports during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Programme Recipients

Programme Recipients should recognise that it is likely there will be fewer new reports available from some regions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this, OCIMF has recently increased the availability of all OCIMF reports from 12 months to 18 months to allow programme recipients a more extensive choice of available screening information.

Programme recipients should bear the current circumstance in mind when reviewing available reports for a vessel during their vetting process.

Member/Submitting Organisations

When commissioning a vessel inspection, the Member/Submitting Organisation should have processes in place to consider the health and safety of the nominated inspector, vessel crew, terminal staff and the general public.



It is recommended that the Member/Submitting Organisation:

- Carefully evaluate the need for an inspection considering applicable COVID-19 specific National, Regional and Local regulations.
- Consider appointing only those inspectors who do not need to travel long distances and/or use public transport to undertake inspections to minimise any exposure to COVID-19 during such travel.
- Recognise that the measures proposed in this document will reduce or mitigate, but not eliminate, the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Develop instructions or guidelines for inspectors nominated to conduct inspections on their behalf during the COVID-19 pandemic which consider:
 - A requirement to submit a travel history for a defined period before the scheduled date of inspection to the Member/Submitting Organisation before the inspection booking is finalised.
 - The COVID-19 exposure criteria, aligned with the latest recommendation from the WHO or regional governments, which would preclude an inspector from inspecting on behalf of the Member/Submitting Organisation.
 - A requirement to notify the Member/Submitting Organisation and vessel operator should the inspector suffer any COVID-19 symptoms from the time of inspection booking until 14 days after completion of the inspection.
 - A requirement to plan and conduct all travel arrangements in strict compliance with National, Regional and Local Government guidance.
 - Additional precautions, such as social distancing or specific PPE they must use to protect themselves, the vessel crew and terminal staff from the threat of COVID-19 transmission.
 - A requirement that an inspector must comply with any additional precautions put in place by the vessel operator, vessel Captain/Master or terminal staff to protect against the threat of COVID-19 transmission, provided it is safe to do so.
 - A requirement that an inspector must terminate an inspection if it is considered unsafe to continue; this includes a possible COVID-19 transmission.
 - The responsibility of the inspector to make notifications of COVID-19 exposure or symptom to the appropriate authorities.
- Develop instructions or guidelines for the vessel operator during the COVID-19 pandemic, which consider a requirement to notify the Member/Submitting Organisation and inspector where any personnel onboard the vessel at the time of an inspection develops COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of the completion of the inspection.

Where an inspector notifies the Member/Submitting Organisation that they have tested positive for COVID-19, the Member/Submitting Organisation should inform OCIMF immediately.



The Vessel Operator

An OCIMF programme inspection will only take place with the express permission of the vessel operator and Captain/Master.

Before granting final permission for an inspection to be undertaken, the vessel operator and Captain/Master should satisfy themselves of the following:

- The vessel has provided ship movement and crew COVID-19 exposure information and, any updates, to the Member/ Submitting Organisation, requested during the inspection booking process.
- The vessel's agent has confirmed that safe access can be provided to the vessel in accordance with local government, port and terminal regulations in force.
- Onboard procedures have been developed which include the implementation of social distancing, as far as is possible on board the vessel, and specified PPE use to protect the crew and visitors from the transmission of COVID-19, in accordance with guidelines published by the IMO in this regard.
- Onboard facilities will be provided for the inspector to wash their hands and dry them with disposable towels.
- Preparations have been made by the vessel staff to expedite the inspection process.
- Awareness that the inspection will be terminated if the continuation of the inspection could result in the health and safety of either the inspector or the vessel crew being compromised.

The Inspector

The inspector has a responsibility to:

- Decline or cancel an inspection appointment if they have suffered or have been in contact with someone else who has suffered COVID-19 symptoms in the 14 days before an inspection.
- Decline or cancel an inspection appointment if they are aware that the vessel to be inspected has been subject to health restrictions imposed by a government body in the 14 days before an inspection.
- Decline or cancel an inspection appointment where travel to the vessel would breach travel restrictions imposed by National, Regional or Local Governments or require them to self-isolate upon returning home.
- Refuse a request to be accompanied by a trainee inspector.
- Verify that travel to and from the port of inspection can be completed in compliance with National, Regional and Local Government regulations in force at the time of travel.
- Comply with any additional safety precautions or PPE requirements imposed by a terminal or vessel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, provided it is safe to do so.
- Comply with social distancing requirements put in place by the vessel, terminal and, where applicable, the local government as far as is possible while onboard a vessel.
- Avoid personal contact and maximise social distancing wherever possible.

- Maintain a high standard of personal hygiene by regular and thorough hand washing before and during each stage of an inspection.
- Ensure that PPE is thoroughly cleaned/washed/exchanged between each ship inspection to reduce contamination risk.
- Take guidance provided by the Flag State into account when reviewing the validity of vessel and crew certificates.
- Terminate an inspection if the additional safety precautions or PPE requirements are considered to adversely affect the safety of the inspector or, vessel or terminal staff.
- Notify the vessel operator and Submitting Organisation if they suffer any COVID-19 symptoms in the 14 days after a vessel inspection.

Glossary

SIRE

Ship Inspection Report Programme, a unique tanker and barge inspection Programme and database containing details of registered Assets and inspection reports.

BIRE

Barge Inspection Report Programme, a part of the SIRE Programme relevant to Assets engaged in inland and coastal barging.

OVID

Offshore Vessel Inspection Database, a unique inspection Programme for offshore Assets and database containing details of registered Assets and inspection reports.

The following links may be of use:

World Health Organization

www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

International Maritime Organization

<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

International Air Transportation Association

<https://www.iata.org/en/youandiata/travelers/health>

International Chamber of Shipping

<https://www.ics-shipping.org>

